

# BIA funds benefit urban Natives

The Bureau of Indian Affairs has told Sen. Ted Stevens that regulations in the Indian Financing Act limiting funds to village corporations established under Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) would not preclude urban Alaskan Natives from benefitting from BIA programs.

In Interior Appropriations Subcommittee hearings, BIA Commissioner Morris Thompson said that BIA money could be used by urban groups if the funded projects would have a positive impact on a village corporation.

Urban Native programs would qualify for the fund, for example, if village Natives were hired to work on the project, Thompson said.

In discussing BIA schools in Alaska, Stevens told Thompson he hoped a task force would be formed by the BIA and the State of Alaska to determine which BIA schools would be transferred first into the State Operated School System.

The SOS has been reorganized for more local authority over schools, and local school boards have begun to request control over BIA schools as well. Before they can be transferred, however, the BIA must repair and modernize them.

Stevens said a task force to determine a schedule of school transfer should be formed so that construction priorities at these schools can be established.